

Gingerbread Mouse



Katy Bratun

It's winter, and Mouse is snuggled under the covers in her tiny, cozy home. Then—CRACK!—a fallen tree branch ruins her house, and Mouse must find another place to live. With courage, determination, and a lot of resourcefulness, Mouse—with help from a cheery bearded man in a red suit—finds not only another house but also a place she can truly call home.

Katy Bratun's warm text and bright illustrations are sure to delight readers young and old.

As an adult, **Katy Bratun** has illustrated over twenty books for children, but has been baking Christmas gingerbread cookies and decorating them with wild abandon ever since she was a child. The story for GINGERBREAD MOUSE comes from those memories of baking with her mother and sisters, when the smell of ginger and cinnamon filled the house. Today she continues the tradition with her son, Eric, and husband, Steve, in Salem, Massachusetts, where she lives.

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Gingerbread Mouse



written and illustrated by Katy Bratun

 HarperCollins Publishers

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*For my dad and mom, Rudy and Alma,
who made our Christmas wishes come true
—K.B.*

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Summary: An accident sends Mouse in search of a new home at Christmas time and she finds what seems to be the perfect one inside of a much larger house, but she meets a new friend with a better idea.

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Gingerbread Mouse





A winter snow had covered the forest,
but Mouse was cozy in her tiny home. She
was snuggled under the covers fast asleep.

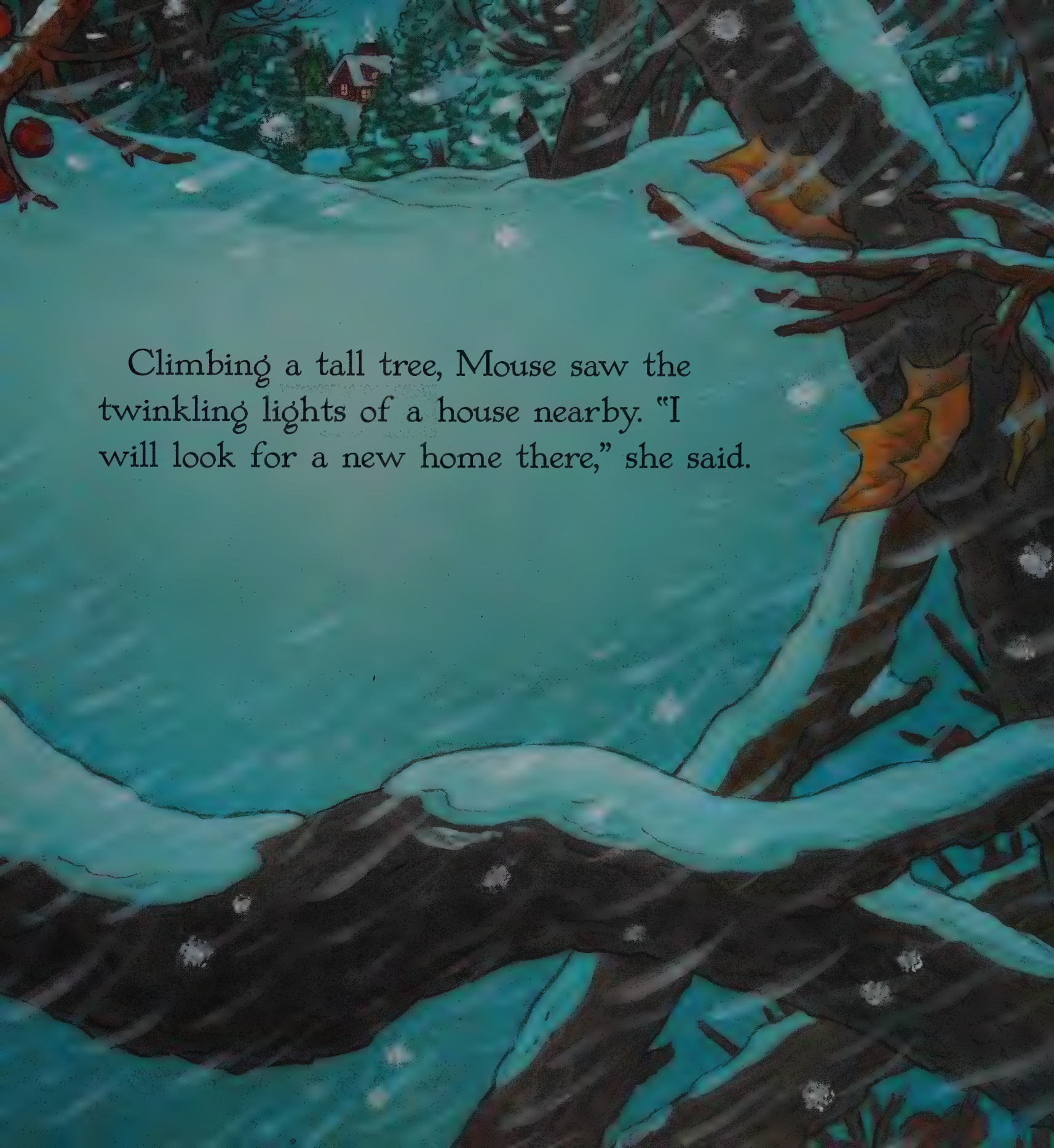




CRACK! Mouse woke up and ran outside. What was that sound? A huge branch crashed to the ground, missing her by inches. "Oh, no!" Mouse cried. Her cozy home was ruined!





A whimsical illustration of a winter scene. The foreground is dominated by a large, dark brown tree trunk and branches, heavily laden with thick white snow. Some branches have a few yellow and orange autumn leaves still attached. In the background, a soft-focus landscape shows a small, cozy house with a red roof and glowing yellow windows, nestled among snow-covered evergreen trees. The sky is a pale, hazy blue, suggesting a misty or snowy day. The overall mood is quiet and hopeful.

Climbing a tall tree, Mouse saw the twinkling lights of a house nearby. "I will look for a new home there," she said.



After a long, cold journey, she reached the big house. A warm light glowed from the window. She climbed up to take a peek. Mouse couldn't believe her eyes! There, inside the house, was her new home, just her size—almost like magic. But how could she get in?









Then Mouse saw her chance. She jumped up onto the tree as it brushed by and was inside the house in a twinkling.







Mouse scurried up onto the table.
She couldn't wait to move in!

She made a small
box into a dresser.



She made a rug and
curtains from ribbon
and string.





She made a rocking chair from cardboard.



"This is starting to feel like home,"
she said softly as she dropped off to sleep.

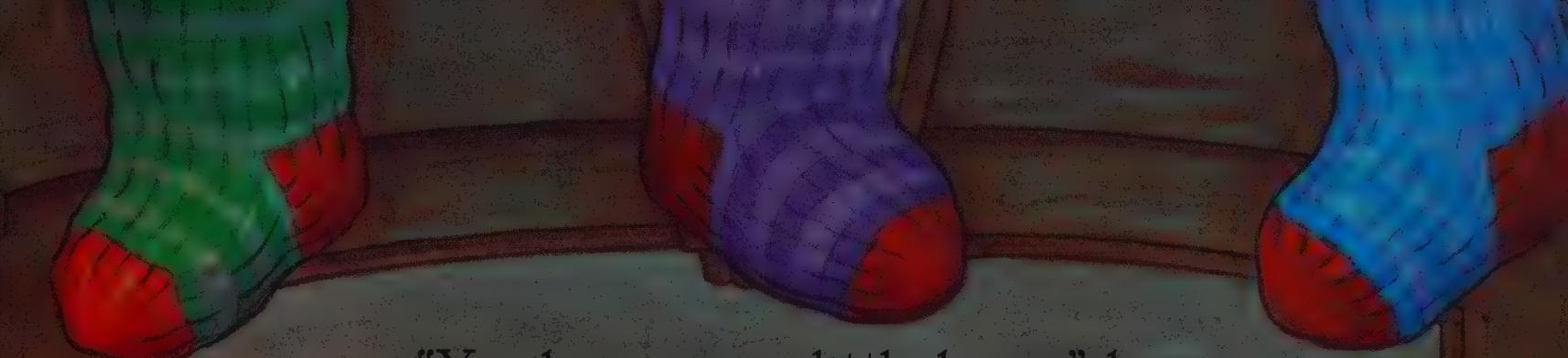




Suddenly there was a huge crash! Mouse jumped up from her bed. "Ouch!" she heard someone say. A giant man in a red suit stumbled into the room from the fireplace, rubbing his head. He pulled packages from a large bag and placed them under the tree.



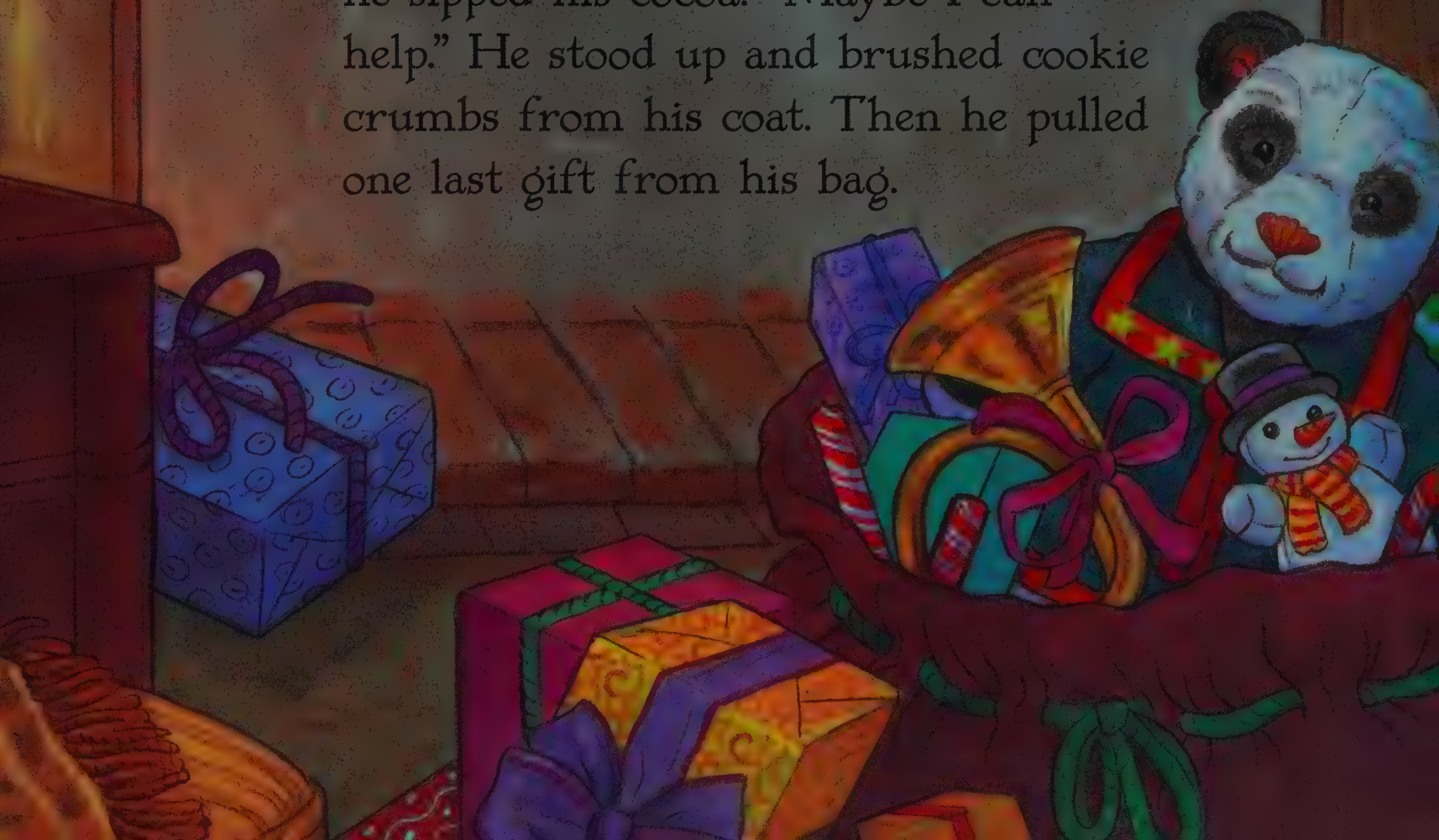




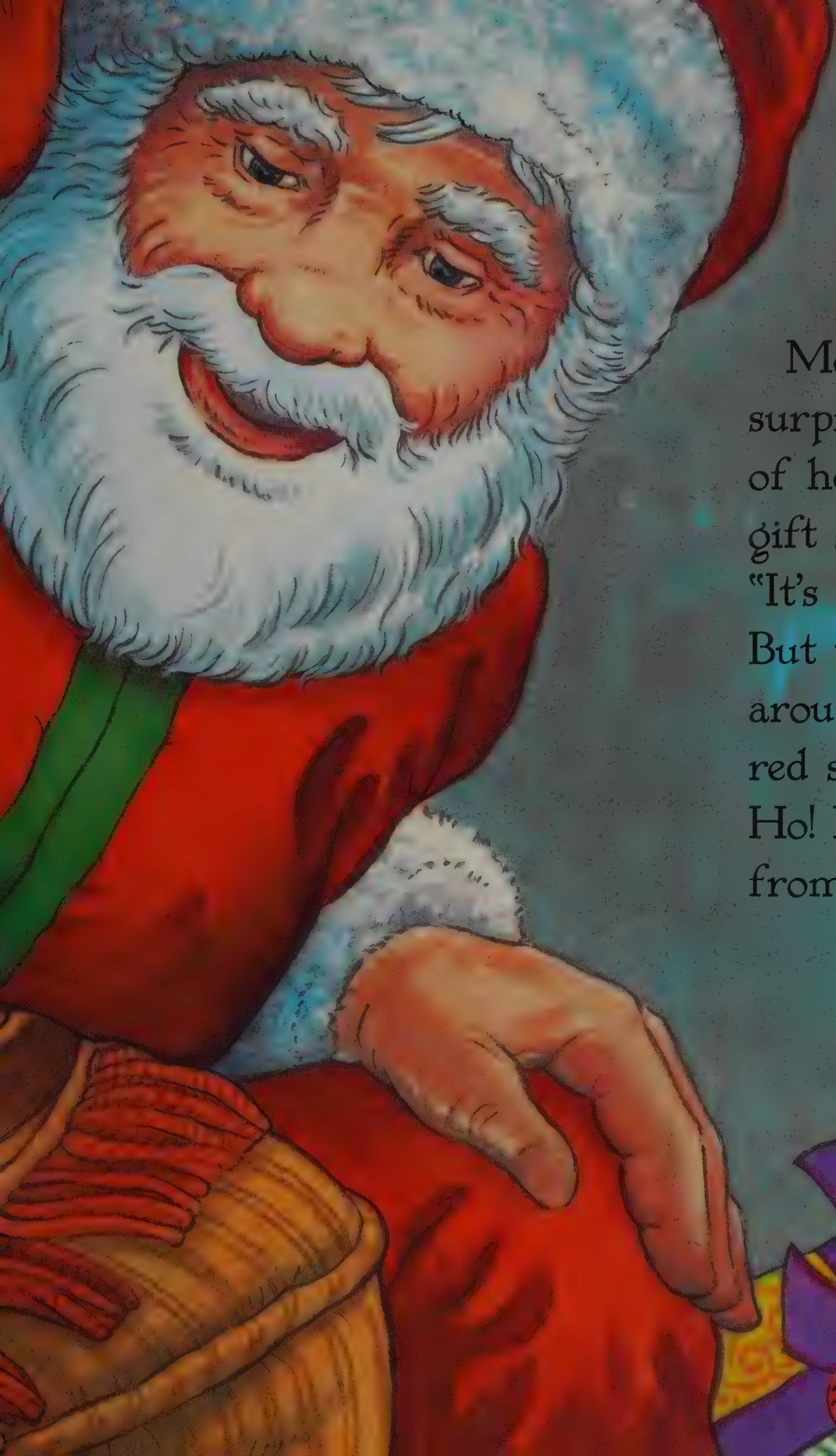
"You have a nice little home," he said as he filled the stockings over the fireplace.

"You mean ME?" Mouse asked.

"You might need a place that will last a bit longer, though," he said as he sipped his cocoa. "Maybe I can help." He stood up and brushed cookie crumbs from his coat. Then he pulled one last gift from his bag.







Mouse gasped in surprise. There in front of her was the nicest gift she could imagine! "It's beautiful!" she cried. But when she turned around, the man in the red suit was gone. "Ho! Ho! Ho!" she heard echoing from the chimney.



Mouse settled in right away.





On Christmas morning, the snow was falling softly outside the window. Mouse got up bright and early to watch the presents being opened.



Later Christmas night, Mouse sat happily knitting a sweater in her new home. She heard a soft knocking sound. She peeked out the door and saw a package on the doorstep. A small card was attached with ribbon.







Gingerbread Mouse's Cookie Recipe



Ingredients:

- 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ sticks (14 tablespoons) butter, softened
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Sift flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves into a large bowl.

2. Beat butter and brown sugar in a medium bowl until creamy. Add egg and vanilla extract; beat until blended.

3. Stir flour mixture into butter mixture, blending well.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
Refrigerate dough until firm.

Roll out a portion of the chilled dough onto a floured surface until it is $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick. Cut cookie shapes with a knife or cookie cutter. Bake cookies on an ungreased cookie sheet, approximately 9 minutes. Cool cookies on a wire rack.

Icing:

Combine 1 cup confectioner's sugar, 1 tablespoon milk, and $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon vanilla extract in a small bowl. Stir until smooth. Frost each cookie and add sprinkles and candies for decoration.

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